

E-Update from Assemblymember Mark DeSaulnier



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Upcoming Event

Community Meeting on Proposed Budget Cuts to Health Care

Hosted by
Assemblymember DeSaulnier & County Supervisor Susan Bonilla

Wednesday
July 9th
7:00 pm to 9:00 pm

St. Francis Assisi
Parish Hall
860 Oak Grove Road
Concord

For additional
Information, please call
(925) 372-7990

A Message from Assemblymember DeSaulnier

Recently Contra Costa County has been host to contrasting press conferences. Though all have focused on the budget, they were different events that demonstrated very different understandings of the impact of the state's budget crisis on Californians.

At the first press conference, Senate President pro Tem Don Perata, Senator Tom Torlakson, Democratic legislators and I joined educators, parents, students and community activists. We discussed what a \$4.8 billion dollar cut to education would look like for kids and teachers. The press conference was held on the front lawn of a local school, open to all.

Following our press event Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger had an invitation only discussion" at which he casually suggested his proposed 10 percent across-the-board cuts (including a \$4.8 billion slice out of schools) won't impact the lives of Californians.

How wrong he is. Californians have needs: our education system is failing our kids, our healthcare system is woefully inadequate. In times of foreclosures and stagnant job growth, hard-working Californians are slipping through the huge holes in our social service safety net.

If enacted, the Governor's plan would ensure the mediocrity of our schools, health care system, and social safety net. Do we really want to make a generational mistake by ensuring our state will never invest in

our children and grandchildren? It is crazy to think that we are the wealthiest state, in the wealthiest country in the world, and we are talking about cutting an education system that needs more resources, not less.

The governor has proposed cuts in Medi-Cal provider rates. But he fails to recognize that this will send federally-paid Medi-Cal recipients—our state's working poor—to the doors of county emergency rooms.

Since 1994, the California Budget Project reports that the state has passed a cumulative \$12 billion in tax cuts. Why is restoring some of these revenues not on the table?

Despite what the Governor and Republican legislators claim, a budget solution balanced between budget cuts and new revenues has worked in California's history.

Even conservative Republicans like Ronald Reagan (who signed proportionately the largest tax increase in California's history) and Pete Wilson (who agreed to \$1 in new revenues for every \$1 in cuts) understood that they could not eviscerate state programs.

With Senator Torlakson as author and myself and Assemblymember Hancock as principal co-authors, we're introducing a constitutional amendment that would allow the legislature to pass the budget and raise taxes with a simple majority.

Forty-seven other states in the country allow their budgets to pass by a majority vote. Our



bill will also maintain the need for a super-majority if the budget includes tax increases.

We should be talking about the recommended cuts to non-essential services proposed by the Legislative Analyst's Office and structural budget reforms.

If we continually fail to recognize the needs of Californians, we will not adequately address our unfortunate conditions: kids who cannot compete in the global economy, families forced to choose between dental care and putting food on the table, an even higher drop out rate and under-educated young people forced onto the streets and into crime.

No one denies that the state needs real, comprehensive structural reform that might possibly include spending caps. However, to enact those caps alone, as the governor proposes, will perpetuate our current crisis of moving money to our prisons and away from what was once the finest public education system in the world.

We have an opportunity to make historic reforms if we roll up our sleeves and get to work.

I look forward to that opportunity.

Assembly District 11 Woman of the Year Norma Griffin



This spring, Concord Resident Norma Griffin was honored by the California State Assembly after being selected by Assemblymember DeSaulnier as the Assembly District 11 Woman of the Year.

Each year one woman from each Assembly and Senate District in the State is officially honored during a ceremony held in Sacramento. The California Legislature created this award in 1987 as a way to celebrate Women's History Month, as well as to honor those women who have demonstrated civic leadership.

As one of the founders of the Black Families Association of Contra Costa County, Norma has a history of community service and involvement that spans more than 30 years.

Mrs. Griffin was given a California State Proclamation, which was presented jointly by Assembly Speaker Karen Bass and Assemblymember DeSaulnier (above). She and Mr. DeSaulnier both joined Senator Tom Torlakson and his Senate District 7 Woman of the Year, Jennifer Peck, for a celebratory lunch following the ceremony.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Standing Committees

Transportation, Chair NEW!!!!

Appropriations

Human Services

Labor and Employment

Air Quality, Chair—NEW!!!!

Select Committees

Alcohol and Drug Abuse NEW!!!!

Domestic Violence—NEW!!!!

Growth Management, Chair

Inland Empire Transportation Issues

Hands-free devices are a must starting July 1st!

Increased reliance on cell phones has led to a rise in the number of people who use the devices while driving, which diverts the driver's eyes from the road and his mind from driving. There is no question that conducting a conversation while using a cell phone demands greater continuous concentration. There have been too many stories throughout the nation of drivers getting into accidents while talking on their cell phones.

There are two dangers associated with driving and cell-phone use, including text messaging. First, drivers must take their eyes off the road while dialing. Second, people can become so absorbed in their conversations that their ability to concentrate on the act of driving is severely impaired, jeopardizing the safety of vehicle occupants and pedestrians.

Since a law was passed in New York in 2001 banning hand-held cell-phone use while driving, there has been debate as to the exact nature and degree of hazard. Statistics compiled from the California Highway Patrol clearly show that it is dangerous to talk on your cell phone when you are behind the wheel driving your car. Speaking on the cell while driving continues to be the number one reason for distracted driving incidents.

That is why in 2005 the California Legislature passed and the Governor signed a measure intended to stress the importance of complete concentration while on the road.

The new law goes into effect on July 1, 2008. It bans the handheld use of cell phones while driving, with certain exceptions for emergency usage. Exceptions to the law include allowing drivers to make emergency calls, such as 911

or law enforcement, as well as permitting drivers of emergency response vehicles to use cell phones without a hand-held device. Drivers of commercial vehicles will not be subject to the law until July 1, 2011.

Also going into effect on July 1st of this year is a complete ban on the use of cell phones and other electronic devices by teenage drivers (those eighteen and under). The penalties are the same. The Legislature is currently considering a measure to ban text messaging while driving. If passed, this measure would ban text messaging after January 1, 2009.

Although many people are turning to the latest technology, the market offers low-cost cell phone headsets and hands-free devices. Being safe does not have to be expensive, but using your handheld cell phone and flouting the law will be. For a first offense, a violator will be charged \$20, for any successive offenses, the fine will be \$50.

Please remember if you need to use your cell phone while driving, get a headset and save lives!



For more information and specifics about hands-free devices, visit the California Highway Patrol website at www.chp.ca.gov.

Legislative Update

In the second year of my legislative term, my team and I reviewed dozens of worthy bill proposals. Many of them came from constituents like you through our “There Ought to Be a Law” contest. Others came from hardworking public officials in our district: teachers, school administrators, public safety officers, and water experts who keep our communities running, our streets safe and our children competitive in this global economy.

This year’s contest winner, constituent Sheri Kuticka of Concord, recognized an unfortunate side effect from the downturn in the housing market. An avid reader, Ms. Kuticka noticed the growing number of media stories detailing pets abandoned when families are forced from their homes. Ms. Kuticka suggested that something should be done to rescue the animals.

April 5th Environmental Fair

On Saturday, April 5th, the Assemblymember hosted his 2nd Environmental Fair at the CSU East Bay campus in Concord. Numerous organizations participated in the event, aimed at educating the public on the importance of caring for our environment and protecting our natural resources. Information was available to help people make simple changes in their everyday lives to reduce their own carbon footprint.

This year, Universal Waste Management provided an e-waste drop-off at the Fair. Over 11,000 lbs of computer monitors and televisions were collected at the site. Almost 200 people took advantage of the e-waste drop-off. Hybrid and electric automobiles were available for viewing at the fair, as well as information from open space and environmental organizations. Segway rides and organic food were also available at the event.

“I look forward to holding this Environmental Fair annually, and my staff is already thinking of ways in which we can expand and improve the event,” stated Assemblymember DeSaulnier.

Many financial institutions, home inspectors, and property owners are reluctant to remove animals from a home due to possible legal liability if the recovery is perceived as theft. Assembly Bill 2949 will provide that in the event of an involuntary animal abandonment, any person or private entity may immediately notify animal control officials for the purpose of retrieving the animal without any penalty. This is a simple change that will allow us to save animal lives. Our thanks go to Ms. Kuticka for her recognition of this issue and the opportunity to continue our work for animal protection.

Also in this year’s legislative package is a measure to protect seniors from financial fraud during the home mortgage process. With the support of the AARP and the Peace Officers Association, AB 2105 extends the list of mandated reporters within the Elder and Dependent

Adult Civil Protection Act and the 2005 Financial Elder Abuse Reporting Act. Currently, financial representatives, like bank tellers, are required to report suspicious activity that might indicate financial abuse of senior citizens. This bill would extend that requirement to licensed mortgage brokers and lenders in an effort to thwart individuals who might notice a senior’s vulnerabilities and use them as an opportunity to swindle the senior out of wealth accumulated in their home.

We have a number of other bills this year from improving our communities with bike paths and pedestrian-oriented development to combating sea-level rise. I look forward to moving these bills through the Legislature and will update you throughout the year on their content, aim and progress.



Assemblymember DeSaulnier talks to attendees at the April 5th Environmental Fair.



Assemblymember DeSaulnier presents a budget powerpoint at the Hercules Town Hall meeting.

Education Town Hall Meetings

Education Town Halls were hosted recently in Hercules and Antioch to discuss the Governor’s proposed budget cuts to education. Assemblymember DeSaulnier convened panels comprised of parents, representatives of school boards and school employees, and the 32nd District PTA to participate in the forum. Each of the panelists provided those attending with information on how the budget cuts would affect their respective schools and organizations.

Assemblymember DeSaulnier gave a powerpoint presentation on the effects of the cuts, as well as an update on the

Budget and potential alternatives to education cuts. Members of the Next Ten organization also presented their interactive “Budget Challenge”, which allowed audience members to select various options to develop a state budget.

Assemblymember DeSaulnier continues to maintain his commitment to education and children. He is dedicated to balancing the budget without jeopardizing our student’s education.

Videos of the recent Foreclosure Workshops and the Education Town Hall meeting are available for viewing on Assemblymember DeSaulnier’s website at:

www.assembly.ca.gov/A11



On the web at:
<http://www.assembly.ca.gov/desaulnier>
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Out and about in the district...



Assemblymember DeSaulnier poses with students at Sun Valley Terrace Elementary in Concord where he participated in "Read Across America" Day, which celebrates the birthday of Dr. Seuss and making reading fundamental for children.



Assemblymember DeSaulnier speaking at a California Teachers Association rally to raise awareness about the Governor's proposed education budget cuts.



Assemblymember DeSaulnier joins Senator Tom Torlakson presenting to students at Los Medanos College during their Civic Speaker Series



Assemblymember DeSaulnier's Staff
 (L to R) Lia Munoz, Kathi Baladad, Lynne West, Lucas Frerichs, Lisa Best, Shara Perkins, Lisa DeNurra, Heather Schiffman, Krista Pfefferkorn

Assemblymember DeSaulnier

will be hosting the

2008 Woman's Health Forum

Coming this Fall

Additional details coming soon!

To be placed on our e-mail list for this event please e-mail

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